The Rain Bird



Retold by: Joanne Bloch

English

Traditional Story

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Retold by: Joanne Bloch
Illustrations: Wiehan de Jager and Nalibali
Reformatted for Bloom by: Marlene Custer

African Storybook Project

English

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English



In a country called Gabon, there was a little village near a forest. In the forest there was a very big tree. In this tree lived a special bird. It was a rain bird.

For many, many years, the villagers were careful to make this bird happy.

Every week they brought delicious food.



They put the food under the tree. They played music for the bird with their instruments.

Then the bird flew down to eat and drink. When she was satisfied, she sang a beautiful song.

Then she spread her wings, and the rain began to fall.



The crops grew nicely. There was plenty of food for everyone. But then, things changed.



The villagers became lazy.

"We don't need that bird," they said. "We have enough to eat."

They stopped feeding the bird.

But they were wrong. The rain stopped falling. They did not have enough to eat. They had to go far away to find money for food.

But still they did not think of the rain bird. They did not feed her.



One hot day a little girl named Palesa was coming home from school. She went into the forest to keep cool. She came to the big tree where the rain bird lived.

"I remember coming here to feed a special bird with my grandmother before she died," she said.

Palesa put some bread from her lunchbox under the tree. She sang an old song that her grandmother had taught her.





Suddenly a beautiful bird flew down from the tree. It began to eat the bread. When it was satisfied, she started to sing a beautiful song.

She raised her wings.

Then Palesa heard the sound of thunder. Before she got home, big rain drops were falling.

It was raining again!

Palesa was very happy, and she told her parents.

"Don't be stupid," said her mother, "this has nothing to do with that bird."

"Your mother is right," said her father, "do not feed that greedy bird again. Now that we have rain again, we will all be fine."

Palesa knew that her parents were wrong.

"I wish my grandmother was here," she said. "She would believe me."



The only thing Palesa had from her grandmother was her old lesiba.

Two weeks passed. The sun was hot in the sky and the rain did not come again. The crops did not grow. The animals were very hungry.



Palesa said, "We need the rain. Tomorrow I must feed the bird in the forest again. Surely, my parents will understand."

So the next morning, Palesa took some bread and some grapes from the kitchen. She walked to the forest to feed the bird. She carried with her her grandmother's old lesiba.

She sat down under the big tree and began to play. She played and played until her fingers were sore.



At last, the bird flew down from the tree. It ate some of the bread and grapes. Palsea played her lesiba. The bird sang a little.



Palesa continued to play.The bird spread its wings, and Palesa heard a sound behind her.



It was her father and some of the villagers.

"We are so sorry," they told the rain bird many times.

Palesa's father took her hand and they walked back to the village.



That night the villagers held a meeting. They all agreed that they had learned a valuable lesson. And from that day onwards, not one week passed without a special trip to the forest to feed the bird that brought the rain.